AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-28. (Cancelled)

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterial cell culture according to claim 42 ~~produced by culturing the cell under conditions that results in a reduced glycolytic flux, and under conditions that enable the cells to have, under aerobic conditions, a respiratory metabolism~~, wherein (A) cells of said ~~cell having~~ culture have, relative to a lactic acid bacterial cell produced in the presence of a readily ~~metabolised~~ metabolized carbon source in excess, an increased activity of the enzymes involved in the uptake and/or degradation of a ~~that~~ carbon source in which ~~the bacterial cell has~~ said cell culture has been propagated, and ~~containing~~ (B) said culture contains a detectable amount of a porphyrin compound and/or a cytochrome.

32. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterial cell culture according to claim 31, wherein said cells ~~which~~ constitutively ~~expresses~~ express the *lac* operon and/or *gal* operon.

33. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterial cell culture according to claim 32, wherein constitutive expression is provided by a mutation in the gene coding for the *lac* repressor and/or *lac* operon.

34. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterial cell culture according to claim 31, wherein said cells contain ~~that contains~~ at least 0.1 ppm on a dry matter basis of a porphyrin compound.

35. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterial cell culture according to claim 31, wherein said cells contain ~~that contains~~ at least 0.1 ppm on a dry matter basis of cytochrome.

36. (Currently Amended) A lactic acid bacterial cell culture according to claim 31, wherein said cells are ~~which is a cell~~ of a lactic acid bacterial species selected from the group

consisting of a *Lactococcus* species, a *Streptococcus* species, a *Leuconostoc* species, a *Lactobacillus* species, and an *Oenococcus* species.

37. (Currently Amended) A starter culture composition comprising the lactic acid bacterial culture ~~or a lactic acid bacterial cell~~ according to claim [30] 31.

38. (Currently Amended) A composition according to claim 37, wherein ~~where~~ the composition is in the form of frozen, liquid or freeze-dried composition.

39. (Currently Amended) A composition according to claim 37, containing an amount of viable, culturally modified lactic acid bacterial cells which is in the range of 10^4 and 10^{12} CFU per g.

40. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 37 that comprises cells of two or more different lactic acid bacterial strains.

41. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 37 which further comprises at least one component enhancing the viability of the bacterial cell during storage, including a bacterial nutrient and/or a cryoprotectant.

42. (New) A culture of lactic acid bacterial cells that are characterized by a reduced glycolytic flux and, under aerobic conditions, a respiratory metabolism, whereby said culture displays a yield of biomass exceeding that obtainable from substrate-level phosphorylation.

43. (New) A starter culture composition comprising the lactic acid bacterial culture according to claim 42.

44. (New) A composition according to claim 43, wherein the composition is in the form of frozen, liquid or freeze-dried composition.

45. (New) A composition according to claim 43, containing an amount of viable, culturally modified lactic acid bacterial cells which is in the range of 10^4 and 10^{12} CFU per g.

46. (New) A composition according to claim 43 that comprises cells of two or more different lactic acid bacterial strains.

47. (New) A composition according to claim 43 which further comprises at least one component enhancing the viability of the bacterial cell during storage, including a bacterial nutrient and/or a cryoprotectant.